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SWALLOWS

BY CONSTANCE GOODRICH

So still have I sat that the swallows are circling about me,
Wheeling with whirring wings over me, close above me,
So close that the rush of their wings startles the air about me.
Yet though my body is quiet my heart is abroad with the swallows,
Circling the spacious sky over the luminous ocean;
My heart's in the wind-driven waters that crash on the rocks,
In the seaweed that swirls in the tide,
That lifts and falls, purple-fringed, to the breath of the sea.
Yet tonight when the dew-laden twilight darkens the waters
And dims the wide fields lying bare to the sky
My heart will be mine again, mine through the night,
While I sing of the breakers that flung it in foam to the beaches,
Of the starlit sea and the wind that the swallows ride—
Sing till my heart is at peace.

LOW TIDE

BY ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

Who creeps into the cave
To spy the crannied secrets darkly hidden,
And pluck the clinging treasures from their beds?
Who follows on retreating steps unbidden,
And mocks the ebbing fury of the wave?
Or impudently treads
The lowest rippled sand a moment bare,
To pry into the bashful, rosy pools? You dare?
Beware!

Is mortal life secure,
Or human footing out of bound so sure,
That wingless you dare climb
Through treacherous and immemorial slime,
Treading the slippery slope, an oubliette before
The cavern's ominous door?
Then hark! Bend close your sea-shell of an ear.
Do you not hear
A hollow growl, a hoarse and sullen roar,
Below you, or behind you, or before;

A growing threat that quivers in the air?
The monster is returning to his lair.

Beware!

Coil upon coil he writhes between the stones
In awful hidden power,
Faster and faster yet. Are human bones,—
Fragile as any flower,—
Proof against teeth that gnawed the granite wall,
And ground it into pebbles smooth and small?
Can frantic feet outspeed
The ancient Terror stealing through the weed,
Who swallows sand and pool and boulder, all
His salty kingdom, briefly visible?
A roar, a rush! Spume leaps upon your hair.
Beware! Beware!